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Correspondence

ESFA Update further education: 22 April 2020

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-22-april-2020/esfa-update-further-education-22-april-2020>

1. Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department for Education (DfE) has published guidance about COVID-19 in educational settings for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>) on GOV.UK.

Please check GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>) regularly for updates.

There is also guidance on the apprenticeship service about COVID-19

(<https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/sections/360003793119-Coronavirus>).

2. Information: reducing burdens on educational and care settings from the Department for Education and its agencies

It is vital, at this time, that all educational and care settings, including local authorities, are able to focus on the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19), providing for the children and young people in their care and looking after the wellbeing of their staff.

To help reduce the burden on educational and care settings at this time, the Department for Education (DfE) and its agencies have cancelled or paused all but the most essential data collections, services and requests from educational and care settings until the end of June 2020. Data collections which are paused will be reviewed and the pause period extended if necessary. A decision on data collections or services which are not due to go live until later in the year will be made in due course.

Further information and a full list of data collection changes

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reducing-burdens-on-educational-and-care-settings>) for the remainder of the academic year can be found on GOV.UK. If you have any problems with completing returns that are still open please email managing.burdens@education.gov.uk.

3. Information: increased fraud risk during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Periods of instability, such as during the coronavirus pandemic, bring an increased risk of fraud.

Fraudsters will actively exploit these difficult times and will target vulnerable areas for financial gain.

We have been informed some learners and parents have received a letter from ESFA asking for personal learner bank details in relation to the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. We never ask for personal bank account details. This is a fraudulent letter – please do not respond.

Where possible, it would be helpful for institutions to share this message with parents and students through your communication channels.

4. Information: IDAMs super users contingency planning for loans agreements

We plan to issue advanced learner loans agreements at the end of April for academic year 2020 to 2021. These will need to be signed by the end of May 2020. Please consider increasing the number of contract approvers your organisation has to ensure agreements are signed promptly and funding can continue to flow.

You can access Manage your education and skills funding (MYESF) (<https://skillsfunding.service.gov.uk/>) on your smart phone if you are working remotely.

5. Information: maximum loan amounts for advanced learner loans designated qualifications 2020 to 2021

We have published our guide to using maximum loan amounts for advanced learner loans designated qualifications (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maximum-loan-amounts-for-advanced-learner-loans-designated-qualifications-2020-to-2021>) 2020 to 2021.

This document sets out the methodology for establishing maximum amounts for advanced learner loans designated qualifications. It also confirms the maximum amounts for the funding year 2020 to 2021.

For further information, please contact the Service Desk marking your query for the attention of the rates and learning aims group.

6. Information: advanced learner loans funding rules for 2020 to 2021

We have published the draft ESFA advanced learner loans (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loans-funding-rules-2020-to-2021>) funding rules for 2020 to 2021. The rules apply to all providers of education and training who hold a loans agreement with ESFA.

This draft includes changes we have made since the 2019 to 2020 version 1 which were published in July 2019. These changes are set out in the summary of changes section at the end of the document. The performance management section will be added in version 1 which is due to be published in early summer.

If you have any queries on these rules, please contact us through our online enquiry form (https://form.education.gov.uk/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-f9f4f5a1-936f-448b-bbeb-9dcdd595f468/AF-Stage-8aa41278-3cdd-45a3-ad87-80cbffb8b992/definition.json&redirectlink=%2Fen&cancelRedirectLink=%2Fen).

7. Information: the ILR funding reports guidance has been updated

We have published version 2 of the ILR funding reports (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/check-ilr-reports-for-possible-data-errors-in-your-return>) guidance for the 2019 to 2020 funding year.

The changes we have made from version 1 of the guidance are:

- added a new report to support delivery of devolved adult education, the ‘Non-Contracted Devolved Adult Education Activity Report’. This report shows provision in your ILR which you have recorded as funded by a devolved authority, but where they have not told us you have a contract with them.
- clarified how we populate aims in the Adult Learner Loans Bursary (ALLB) Occupancy report.

For further information please contact the Service Desk.